

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02
SSM-05 PA-02 USIE-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00
INR-07 INRE-00 /084 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MR. COLLUMS
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/IRN - MR. NAAS
AF/P-MR.HOLLIDAY

-----035984 012315Z /70

O 012230Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, ALEXANDRIA FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 1

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 1. FYI ONLY,
THE OFFICER DURING THE BRIEFING TODAY WAS JOHN TRATTNER.

Q. COULD YOU SHED ANY LIGHT ON THESE REPORTS FROM TEHRAN
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ABOUT THE IRANIANS BACKING AWAY FROM THE AWACS SALE?

A. YES. WE HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION
FROM IRAN ABOUT THE REPORTED CANCELLATION OR WITHDRAWAL OF
THE REQUEST. I WOULD JUST NOTE WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID
LAST WEEK--THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S NOTIFICATION TO
CONGRESS ON THE PROPOSED SALE WAS WITHDRAWN BUT WILL BE
RESUBMITTED IN EARLY SEPTEMBER IN ORDER TO GIVE CONGRESS
ADDITIONAL TIME TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL. THERE HASN'T
BEEN ANY CHANGE IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO
PROVIDE THE AWACS AIRCRAFT TO IRAN.

Q. CAN YOU SHED FURTHER LIGHT ON REPORTS THAT THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION HAS APPROVED TWO AMERICAN FIRMS GOING TO
EGYPT TO FIT MIG JETS?

A. I HAVEN'T GOT ANY COMMENT ON THOSE STORIES.

Q. NO COMMENT OR NO CONFIRMATION?

A. NO COMMENT.

Q. WHY IS THAT? WHY IS THERE NO COMMENT ON THIS? IS IT A MATTER OF SUCH GREAT SECRECY OR IS IT BECAUSE THE PLANS ARE NOT YET COMPLETE?

A. I'M GOING TO LIMIT MYSELF TO WHAT I'VE SAID. I'M NOT ABLE TO GO BEYOND IT.

Q. WELL, IT IS AN UNUSUAL CASE BECAUSE IT IS NOT A MATTER OF NEGOTIATIONS OF A NORMAL NATURE ON A SUBJECT OF SENSITIVITY. IT IS A REPORT CONCERNING A CONTRACT, I WOULD ASSUME.

THIS, PRESUMABLY, WOULD BE A COMMERCIAL TYPE OF TRANSACTION. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ON WHAT BASIS THE STATE UNCLASSIFIED

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DEPARTMENT IS INVOKING A DISCLAIMER TO DISCUSS IT.

A. I NOTE YOUR POINT, BUT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO STICK WITH WHAT I HAVE SAID.

Q. IS IT SOMETHING ON WHICH THERE IS GOING TO BE SOME LATER COMMENT, OR IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT JUST GOING TO SIT SILENT ON THIS ISSUE?

A. FOR RIGHT NOW, I'M GOING TO SAY I HAVE NO COMMENT ON THE STORIES THAT I WAS ASKED ABOUT.

Q. HAVE YOU ANYTHING ON THE TALKS BETWEEN SECRETARY VANCE AND SADAT?

A. WELL, I THINK THEY HAVE PROBABLY NOT YET GOTTEN UNDER WAY. I DON'T THINK THEY WERE DUE TO ARRIVE UNTIL ABOUT AN HOUR AGO. I DOUBT VERY MUCH IF THE TWO MEN HAVE EVEN SEEN EACH OTHER AT THIS POINT.

Q. IT IS 7 O'CLOCK IN EGYPT NOW, IN THE EVENING.

A. WELL, IN ANY CASE, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING.

Q. YOU WON'T BE GIVING ACCOUNTS FROM THAT PODIUM ANYWAY, RIGHT?

A. I DON'T EXPECT TO. IT'S BEEN OUR CUSTOM, AND A USEFUL ONE, THAT WHAT HAPPENS ON ONE OF THESE TRIPS IS DESCRIBED AND ENUNCIATED BY THE PARTY AND NOT FROM HERE.

Q. THE POST TODAY HAS SHOWN THAT U.N. TROOPS WOULD BE NEAR THE ISRAELI BORDER. DOES THAT MEAN THAT THE OBSER- UNCLASSIFIED

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VERS OF THE U.N. ARE GOING TO BE STATIONED IN LEBANON
OR BETWEEN LEBANON AND ISRAEL?

A. I DON'T KNOW. I HAVEN'T SEEN THOSE REPORTS AND I
DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY MIGHT MEAN. I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T
WANT TO INTERPRET THEM FOR YOU.

I THINK ON THE QUESTION OF A U.N. FORCE FOR LEBANON, WE
HAVE ANSWERED THAT QUESTION IN THE VERY RECENT PAST.
THIS IS A PROJECT THAT WE HAVE BEEN TRYING FOR A LONG TIME
TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR, THAT IS, THE PROBLEM OF PEACE-
KEEPING AND STABILIZING THE SITUATION IN LEBANON. AND I
DON'T THINK THERE ARE ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS NOW THAN
WHAT WAS REPORTED THE LAST TIME WE TALKED ABOUT IT.

Q. IS IT THE U.N. OBSERVERS OR U.N. TROOPS?

A. I JUST DON'T KNOW THAT THAT HAS TAKEN ANY KIND OF
SHAPE YET. I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANYTHING I CAN ANSWER
YOU ON THAT ONE.

Q. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS
CONSIDERING GIVING MILITARY AID TO SOMALIA, CAN YOU
CONFIRM OR SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE REPORT THAT
SOMALIAN PLANES HAVE RAIDED THE PART THAT THEY CLAIM IN
ETHIOPIA AND THAT THERE ARE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES?

A. NO, I CAN'T. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT.

I DO HAVE ONE NOTE, HOWEVER, FOR YOU. I THINK WE MENTIO-
NED TO YOU LAST WEEK THAT A SURVEY TEAM WOULD BE GOING TO
SUDAN, AND I DID FIND OUT THAT THAT TEAM WILL LEAVE
TOMORROW, AUGUST 2, AND WILL COME BACK SOMETIME WITHIN
THE PERIOD 18 TO 21 AUGUST. IT WILL BE HEADED BY MAJOR
GENERAL JOSEPH N. JAGGERS, JR. AND ON THE TEAM, WHICH I
THINK IS AN EIGHT-MAN TEAM, WILL BE ONE REPRESENTATIVE FR-
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OM THE STATE DEPARTMENT, WILLIAM H. LEWIS, FROM THE
AFRICAN AFFAIRS BUREAU.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE LIBYAN CHARGE THAT
THE UNITED STATES WAS PARTICIPATING IN BEHALF OF EGYPT
DURING THE WAR LAST MONTH?

A. I SAW THAT ONE, TOO, AND I MUST SAY THAT IS AN UNFOUNDED CHARGE.

Q. HOW ABOUT THE ALLEGATION BY EGYPTIANS THAT CUBANS WERE ASSISTING THE LIBYANS? AND SOVIETS?

A. I CAN'T COMMENT ON THAT BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF IT. I REALLY AM NOT INFORMED ABOUT THAT.

Q. WOULD THE ADMINISTRATION OBJECT IN PRINCIPLE TO AMERICAN FIRMS HELPING THE EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE TO REHABILITATE ITSELF WITH OTHER COUNTRIES' EQUIPMENT?

A. AGAIN, I HAVE ALREADY GIVEN YOU A NO COMMENT ANSWER ON THAT STORY. IN PRINCIPLE IS ALMOST NEXT DOOR TO A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION--IF--AND I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO SPECULATE ABOUT IT, EVEN IN PRINCIPLE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: THE PRESS, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE180118
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: REUNDELAND:RGH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770275-0862
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197708109/aaaadoyy.tel
Line Count: 241
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 02fc2150-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1427960
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 1 FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 1. FYI
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, MPOL, XF
To: AMMAN ALEXANDRIA MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/02fc2150-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009